

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

INFO AMCONSUL CALGARY

AMCONSUL HALIFAX

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL TORONTO

AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

AMCONSUL ST JOHNS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BGEN, PINT, CA

SUBJECT: QUEBEC BILL 22 RE LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

REF: TORONTO A-20, MAY 5, 1975

1. US IS CONCERNED ABOUT LACK OF PUBLISHED REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUEBEC'S BILL 22. FAILURE TO PROVIDE REGULATIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE ISSUED IN CONJUNCTION WITH IMPENDING IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERAL CONSUMER PACKAGING AND LABELLING ACT IS CAUSING CONFUSION AMONG US MANUFACTURERS/EXPORTERS WHO WISH TO REDESIGN PACKAGING AND LABELS FOR
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NON-FOOD CONSUMER ITEMS TO MEET FEDERAL DEADLINE OF

SEPTEMBER 1 IN MANNER WHICH WILL ALSO MEET QUEBEC STANDARDS. SHOULD THERE BE AN EXTRA EXPENSE FOR DESIGNING/APPLYING SEPARATE PACKAGING/LABELLING FOR PRODUCTS DESTINED FOR QUEBEC AS OPPOSED TO OTHER PROVINCES THE COST WOULD BE PROHIBITIVE, IN MANY INSTANCES PRECLUDING FURTHER SHIPMENTS TO QUEBEC. STATEMENT IN REF. AIRGRAM THAT LABELS COULD COMPLY WITH NEW FEDERAL REGULATIONS WHILE CONFLICTING WITH QUEBEC'S ARE EXTREMELY DISCONCERTING. QUEBEC MINISTER OF STATE'S SUGGESTION THAT EXPORTERS MINIMIZE PROBLEMS BY COMPLYING WITH MORE STRINGENT QUEBEC REGULATIONS IS UNREALISTIC. NOTIFICATION OF DETAILS OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES ARE WELL ADVANCED WHILE QUEBEC REGULATIONS REMAIN UNKNOWN MAKING COMPLIANCE WITH MINISTER'S SUGGESTION IMPOSSIBLE. FURTHER, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS SOLICITED COMMENTS AND ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF PACKAGING AND LABELS WHILE APPARENTLY QUEBEC HAS NOT. WE HAVE RECEIVED NO INDICATION TO DATE WHEN QUEBEC'S REGULATIONS WILL BE PUBLISHED OR ENFORCED, WHETHER THEY WILL APPLY TO RETAIL GOODS ONLY OR TO ALL PRODUCTS, WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION WILL BE REQUIRED AND IN WHAT FORMAT, WHETHER LOCAL RELABELLING WILL BE PERMITTED, ETC.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY AND CONSULATE GENERAL SHOULD: (1) INFORM APPROPRIATE FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS OF EXTENT OF U.S. CONCERN AND RAMIFICATIONS FOR U.S.-CANADIAN-QUEBEC TRADE. STRESS THAT NEED TO USE SEPARATE LABELS/PACKAGING TO MEET QUEBEC REGULATIONS, SHOULD THEY BE INCONSISTENT WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS, WOULD IN MANY INSTANCES CONSTITUTE A PROHIBITIVE TRADE BARRIER CAUSING LOSS TO U.S. EXPORTERS AND DEPRIVING THE PROVINCE OF VARIOUS SUPPLIES. (2) SUGGEST OBVIOUS NEED FOR FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL COORDINATION TO ELIMINATE ALL CONFLICTS BETWEEN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS. EMPHASIZE THAT OUR CONCERN IS NOT WITH NATURE OF REGULATIONS RE USE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE, METRIC UNITS, ETC. BUT WITH POTENTIAL CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO SETS OF REGULATIONS. ACTION ADDRESSEES SHOULD NOTE THAT FIRMS CONTACTING WASHINGTON HAVE INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO MEET REGULATIONS AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE AND THAT USG WISHES TO ASSIST THEM IN COMPLYING. (3) CONSULATE GENERAL SHOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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INFORM PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES THAT EARLY PUBLICATION OF QUEBEC REGULATIONS WOULD SERVE TO ALLAY EXPORTERS' CONCERN AND SUGGEST THAT SOLICITING COMMENTS ON PROPOSED REGULATIONS DURING AN APPROPRIATE PERIOD PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION COULD FACILITATE AVOIDANCE OF UNFORESEEN DIFFICULTIES FOR AUTHORITIES AND U.S. EXPORTERS. KISSINGER

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